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ABSTRACT

This feature issue of a quarterly bulletin on community integration addresses the topic of transition services for preparing youth with disabilities for adult community living. It contains articles with the following titles and authors: "Transition: The Next Five Years" (David R. Johnson and others); "Transition Policy in the 1990s: Promoting State and Local Leadership" (William Halloran and Michael Ward); "Transition Systems Change in Minnesota" (Sandy Thompson and Stephanie Corbey); "Life Profiles of Youth with Disabilities: Findings from the National Longitudinal Transition Study" (Mary Wagner and Lizanne DeStefano); "TIPS: A New Transition Planning System for Schools" (David R. Johnson and others); "TIPS: A Teacher's View" (Mary Ann Brenk); "Waiting for Services" (David R. Johnson and Teri Wallace); "Business Helps Dream Come True" (Kathy Raymor); "National Center Addresses Educational Outcomes" (Martha L. Thurlow); "Inclusive Education and Transition" (Sandy Thompson); "A Postsecondary Student Retention System with Related Accommodation Teams" (Lynda Price); and "Transition to Postsecondary Education: Lynn's Story" (Sheryl Evelo and Denise Simonett). A section on resources for transition information lists seven programs and resource centers, six publications, and twelve state transition systems change grantees. (JDD)

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Feature Issue on Transition

Institute on Community Integration
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INSTITUTE ON COMMUNITY INTEGRATION
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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Feature Issue on Transition

Volume 5 (3) Fall, 1992

# Transition: The Next Five Years

*by David R. Johnson, Robert H. Bruininks, and Teri Wallace*

The next five years will be a critical period in the nationwide evolution of transition services for young adults with disabilities. Given the nature of changes and new mandates within the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 1990, the future of transition is in large part dependent on state-level policy formulation, interagency planning, and service development. Several states have already developed policies and programs that follow the provisions outlined in IDEA. For other states, however, the new statutory language will require dramatic changes in the manner in which secondary special education programs and services are planned and carried out on behalf of students with disabilities.

**Using innovative transition planning strategies, such as the computer-based TIPS (see page 6), schools, families, and students are improving the adult outcomes for youth with disabilities.**

## ■ Transition Services Today

Since 1983, the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS), has emphasized the importance of improving transition services nationally. Numerous studies commissioned by OSERS and the National Institute on Disability Rehabilitation and Research (NIDRR) have provided substantial documentation of the difficulties individuals with disabilities experience upon leaving school. Reports suggest high levels of unemployment, economic instability and dependence, and social isolation among young adults with disabilities. Further, when individuals with disabilities and their families turn to community services for support and assistance, long waiting lists are often found. Those who do gain entry into publicly supported residential, day habilitation, and vocational services many times experience limited opportunities for community integration, slow movement toward employment, and low wages. For most individuals with severe disabilities, living in the community following transition from school means long-term financial need, family dependence, and isolation from peers.

The past two decades of educational research and programming have given rise to a powerful consensus on the benefits of assisting young people with disabilities and their families during the critical transition years. The

*IDEA, continued on page 15*

# From the Editors

This issue of IMPACT speaks to many of the issues that states and local communities will be addressing over the next several years as they prepare youth with disabilities for adult community living. Transition services are evolving so rapidly in this country that this issue of IMPACT is in some respects already outdated. Between the writing and publishing of this issue, the 12 recipients of state transition system change grants (see page 14) grew to 24. And another major step forward in transition occurred with the establishment of the National Transition Implementation Institute (NTII).

NTII is a collaborative venture of the Institute on Community Integration and the University of Vermont, Colorado State University, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and University of Arkansas, along with the national network of Regional Resource Centers, federal and state agencies, and consumer, advocacy, and education organizations. Funded by the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, U.S. Department of Education, it will assist the 24 systems change grantees in improving state transition policies and services.

This is a time that challenges us to keep up with the possibilities that are being realized in transition services .We hope that this issue of IMPACT will provide a taste of the many exciting opportunities that exist.

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**A publication of the Institute on Community Integration (a University Affiliated Program), College of Education, University of Minnesota. Dedicated to improving community services and social supports for persons with disabilities and their families.**

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# Transition Policy in the 1990s: Promoting State and Local Leadership

*by William Halloran and Michael Ward*

In the 1990s, transition policy in the United States will be focused on the implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Public Law 101-476. Whereas the policies of the 1970s stressed accountability through increased documentation and litigative resources, and the 1980s emphasized assessing real-life outcomes associated with special education, it is clear that the new requirements of the IDEA represent a major policy shift from permissive, "appropriate" services to prescriptive, required services. Required services are instruction, community experiences, and the development of employment and other postschool adult living objectives. Transition as defined in 1984 is clearly intended to be an "outcome oriented process" that promotes movement from school to postschool employment, postsecondary education, and community living. The alignment of policy to ensure implementation of the new requirements demonstrates the evolutionary nature of transition policy and the importance placed on the need to assist states and local communities in achieving these broad goals.

In response to this need, the U. S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) is making available five-year grants to states in which the state educational agency and vocational rehabilitation agency submit a joint application to develop, implement, and improve transition service systems for youth with disabilities. During the fiscal year 1991, 12 states received funds to initiate state-level projects. It is expected that approximately 12 additional states will be funded in fiscal year 1992. States that receive grants will use funds to:

- Increase the availability, access, and quality of transition assistance to facilitate the development and improvement of policies, procedures, systems, and other mechanisms for youth with disabilities and their families as such youth prepare for and enter adult life.
- Improve the ability of professionals, parents, and advocates to work with such youth in ways that promote the understanding of and capability to successfully make the transition from "student to adult."
- Improve working relationships among education personnel, both within the local education agencies and postsecondary training programs, and with relevant state agencies, the private sector (especially employers), rehabilitation services, local and state employment agencies, local private industry councils authorized by the Job Training Partnership Act, and families of students with disabilities and their advocates. Identify and achieve consensus on the general nature and specific application of transition services to meet the needs of youth with disabilities.
- Create an incentive for accessing and using the expertise and resources of transition-related programs, projects, and activities funded through these grants and other sources.

In making available these funds to states, OSERS has been particularly interested in funding projects that: (a) target resources to improve school and community service transition programs; (b) gather information on the postschool outcomes and current status of former special education students; (c) promote interagency and private-sector resource pooling in the design and development of transition services; (d) provide training for parents and youth with disabilities that enhances their capacities to improve students' transitions from school; and (e) emphasize the involvement of private-sector employers in all aspects of project planning and delivery. State projects funded thus far have included these as well as a variety of other activities, all intended to lead to the development of high quality, effective transition programs and services at the state and local levels.

By the fall of 1992, OSERS will have developed a cooperative agreement with an institution of higher education, or non-profit public or private organization, to establish a national institute to provide evaluation and technical assistance to states implementing state systems projects. The institute will be charged with the responsibility of documenting the outcomes and impact of each state project in improving transition services for youth with disabilities and families. Technical assistance provided by the institute will be specifically targeted to enabling individual states to achieve state-level goals and priorities.

The initiation of these state systems projects represents a major undertaking by the federal government on behalf of youth with disabilities and their families nationally. Over the next several years, we expect that these implementation efforts will result in the formulation of meaningful transition policies at the state level, widescale improvements in transition services, and improved postschool outcomes and adult life experiences for youth with disabilities and families across the United States.

*William Halloran and Michael Ward are with the Secondary Transition Program, U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs.*

# Transition Systems Change in Minnesota

*by Sandy Thompson and Stephanie Corbey*

The Minnesota Department of Education's Special Education Section and the Division of Rehabilitation Services have been awarded a statewide systems change grant to collaboratively improve transition services for youth with disabilities in the state. The grant, from the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS), is bringing an estimated $500,000 per year to Minnesota from 1991-96. Youth with disabilities and members of their families are included as primary partners and collaborators in this project and have played an integral part in all phases of planning and decision making.

The project has five primary goal areas for which activities are underway. These are:

- **Goal 1: State-level policy development and administrative planning.**

Community forums have been conducted statewide by project staff, transition personnel from the Centers for Independent Living, and members of Project Invest (professionals from throughout the state who have received intensive training in transition). Information and advice on transition have been collected from several hundred students and adults with disabilities, parents/advocates, and professionals from education and community service agencies.

A project of this magnitude requires the input of many people. Project staff are fortunate to be able to continually draw on the expertise and advice of three primary stakeholder groups. The first is the State Transition Interagency Committee, created in 1984, which has members representing over 15 state agencies and advocacy groups. Second is a policy committee that was originally formed to address the area of supported employment and has now expanded to include transition. Members of this committee represent assistant commissioners and staff from the states' departments of Education, Jobs and Training, and Human Services. And, perhaps the most important stakeholder group is our Community Advisory Committee that was brought together to specifically address activities of the systems change grant.

To compile and analyze policies related to transition from several agencies, a request for proposals was designed and disseminated through Minnesota's State Register. The project was awarded to the Institute on Community Integration, which is currently writing a report containing this important information.

- **Goal 2: Consumer and family participation in the transition planning process.**

Members and potential members of Minnesota's Community Transition Interagency Committees (CTICs) were invited to participate in two summer institutes at two state universities. Teams of up to seven members from each CTIC were invited. All fees were covered by the systems change grant. The over 100 participants included high school students and young adults with disabilities, parents, and professionals from education and several adult service agencies. The institute gave CTIC members a unique opportunity to participate in in-depth planning and collaboration. The training was sponsored by the Minnesota Department of Education and the Division of Rehabilitation Services, in collaboration with PACER Center (a disability education/advocacy organization) and the Institute on Community Integration.

Other activities involving parents and consumers include compilation of transition materials and a feasibility study for a statewide informational directory and phone service.

- **Goal 3: Professional development and training.**

Part of the professional training was included in the summer institutes described above. Informational materials are also being compiled in this area and training has been cosponsored for paraprofessionals and employers.

- **Goal 4: Demonstration and technical assistance.**

In the grant's first year, 61 of Minnesota's 70 CTICs received $1000 each to pursue the goals and activities most needed in their communities. The CTICs receiving funds this year have chosen a wide range of activities for transition, including developing transition brochures and resource guides, holding transition fairs/workshops for students, implementing the Minnesota Post-School Follow-Up System, educating employers through inservices and/or appreciation banquets, and creating a task force to develop a model high school elective course on transition.

- **Goal 5: Information exchange.**

The primary avenue for the written exchange is currently our quarterly newsletter, *What's Working in Transition*. This newsletter contains ideas, strategies, and practices from CTICs, schools, and agencies across the state.

Many activities are being planned for the next four years of this important grant. We are very excited about our progress so far and are looking forward to continued improvement throughout the entire grant period.

*Sandy Thompson and Stephanie Corbey are Transition Specialists at the Interagency Office on Transition Services, Minnesota Department of Education.*

# Life Profiles of Youth with Disabilities: Findings from the National Longitudinal Transition Study

*by Mary Wagner and Lizanne DeStefano*

The National Longitudinal Transition Study (NLTS) explores a new approach to measuring the independence of out-of-school youth with disabilities. Through the use of life profiles addressing the degree of independence of young people with disabilities in employment, residential, and social domains, we have seen a significant movement toward greater general independence for youth with disabilities overall, and for youth in most disability categories.

## ■ Purpose of the Study

The Congressional mandate that authorized the NLTS (P.L. 98-199, Sec. 8, Section 618e1) specified that it measure the outcomes of youth with disabilities in three specific areas: employment, education, and independent living. Each of these outcomes is an important indicator of one aspect of the lives of youth in transition, but an integrated picture of the whole of their experience cannot be drawn by concentrating on only one indicator in isolation from the others. The fabric of their lives is a complex interweaving of their activities and experiences with work, school, family, friends, and living arrangements. In an attempt to draw a fuller picture of the lives of young people with disabilities - to go beyond the individual outcomes of employment, education, and independent living and examine how these experiences blend - the NLTS uses the idea of a life profile.

The life profile is a composite measure representing independence in three domains of life: engagement in work or education-related activities outside the home, residential arrangements, and social activities. The most independent youth will be independent in all three domains. Those who are less independent may achieve independence in two out of the three. The most dependent youth will be independent in one or none of the domains. Some students, because of limitations imposed by their disability or other factors, may not achieve independence for many years after leaving school. Some may never reach independence in all three domains. However, the goal of educational programming and the transition process should be to assist students to move from lesser to greater independence in the early years after leaving school.

## ■ Study Methodology

The NLTS has examined the changes in life profiles of 1,706 students from across the country over two time periods: less than two years after leaving school and three to four years after leaving school. We were interested to see whether students moved toward greater independence during that time, whether they maintained the same level of independence, or whether they moved toward a more dependent lifestyle. We investigated the relationship between this movement and demographic variables such as disability category, gender, race, and graduation status. Finally, we speculated upon the implications of the findings for transition practice and research.

A thorough description of the NLTS sample, data collection, and analysis is found in *What Happens Next? Trends in Postschool Outcomes for Youth with Disabilities: The Second Comprehensive Report from the National Longitudinal Transition Study of Special Education Students* (Wagner, D'Amico, Marder, Newman, & Blackorby, 1992).

## ■ Study Results

The table on the opposite page displays the extent to which youth moved toward more or less independent profiles or retained the same profile over the two time periods, and how those patterns of movement varied for youth across disability categories, gender, and graduation status. Looking at youth with disabilities in general we find that about half experienced an increase in their level of independence over time, fitting a more independent profile 3 to 5 years after secondary school than in the earlier time period. About one-third of youth (31.7%) were stable, retaining the same profile over time, and 18.3% moved into a less independent profile.

Given the marked differences in almost all outcomes for youth in different disability categories, it is somewhat surprising that their overall pattern of fluctuation in profiles over time is quite similar across disability categories. For example, the percentage of youth who moved toward greater independence ranged between 46.1% and 53.4% in 9 of the 11 categories. The exceptions were the significantly lower likelihood of moving toward greater independence among youth with multiple impairments or deaf-blindness (30.6% and 25.2% respectively). The percentage of youth who experienced the negative consequence of moving toward less independence were also similar for 9 categories (range: 14.5% to 25.7%). In this category, youth with orthopedic (9.9%) or health impairments (9.6%) were least likely to have moved toward less independence, probably because they were the least dependent to start with.

Differences in movement between profiles over time is apparent for youth with different modes of school leaving. Graduates were significantly more likely than those aging out of school to have moved toward greater independence (53.8% vs. 39.5%). Similarly, graduates (53.8%) were consistently

more likely than dropouts (44.9%) to move toward greater independence and less likely to move toward less independence (15.3% vs. 23.2%).

There appear to be no gender differences in the overall pattern of fluctuation in profiles.

## ■ Discussion

Through the NLTS we have documented a significant movement toward greater general independence for youth with disabilities overall, and for youth in most disability categories. However, we must temper this good news with caution. Although half of youth with disabilities in general move toward greater independence, about one fifth (18.3%) are more dependent three to five years of school than they were immediately after leaving school. Increased dependence is likely to take different forms across individuals, but most often is reflective of job loss, failure to access and maintain appropriate housing, social isolation, institutionalization, or incarceration. These findings indicate that for a segment of youth in transition, difficulties continue well past leaving school and that intensive support and follow-along is needed for the first several years into adult life.

Even for the group that moves toward greater independence, we are reminded that the full-time productive employment outside the home that is common for the most independent youth still frequently means employment at relatively low skill and low paying jobs. There are still unmet needs for support services even among this population. Among the most independent youth, 25% of unserved youth were perceived by their parents to be in need of vocational assistance in the form of further training, job counseling, or job placement assistance (Wagner, et al., 1992). Levels of unmet needs were usually higher for youth with less independent profiles. Parents' perceptions of need suggest that they believed their children had the potential for greater independence than they had achieved and that support services were needed to translate that potential into accomplishment.

In short, current levels of independence translate into continued financial dependence for many youth. Current levels of independence also may fail to tap the full degree of independence of which youth are capable, given appropriate support. Both of these facts imply that many youth will be continuing to strive for greater independence. To support and enable their efforts, systems should consider needs and the impact of services across life domains. The life profile approach presented here is one example of new and better outcome measures that can be used to evaluate services.

*Mary Wagner is Senior Research Scientist at SRI International, Menlo Park, California. Lizanne DeStefano is Assistant Professor of Educational Psychology at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.*

**Reference: Wagner, M., D'Amico, R., Marder, C., Newman, L., & Blackorby, J. (1992). What Happens Next? Trends in Postschool Outcomes for Youth with Disabilities: The Second Comprehensive Report from the National Longitudinal Transition Study of Special Education Students. Menlo Park, CA: SRI International.**

### Fluctuation in Life Profiles of Youth with Disabilities

By Disability Category, Gender, and Graduation Status

| Youth Characteristics | % Moving Toward More Independence | % Remaining Stable | % Moving Toward Less Independence | N |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| All Youth w/ Disabilities | 50.0 | 31.7 | 18.3 | 1706 |
| Learning Disability | 51.7 | 33.8 | 14.5 | 305 |
| Emotional Disturbance | 52.3 | 23.4 | 24.3 | 178 |
| Speech Impairment | 53.4 | 27.2 | 19.4 | 118 |
| Mental Retardation | 46.1 | 30.2 | 23.8 | 242 |
| Visual Impairment | 52.6 | 28.1 | 19.3 | 159 |
| Hard of Hearing | 43.9 | 35.4 | 20.7 | 132 |
| Deafness | 49.0 | 25.3 | 25.7 | 233 |
| Orthopedic Impairment | 51.3 | 38.8 | 9.9 | 143 |
| Other Health Impairment | 45.9 | 44.5 | 9.6 | 73 |
| Multiple Disabilities | 30.6 | 44.2 | 25.2 | 92 |
| Deaf/Blindness | 25.2 | 56.2 | 18.6 | 31 |
| Male | 49.6 | 30.9 | 19.5 | 1066 |
| Female | 50.8 | 33.5 | 15.8 | 640 |
| Graduated School | 53.8 | 30.9 | 15.3 | 1169 |
| Dropped Out | 44.9 | 31.1 | 24.1 | 238 |
| Aged Out | 39.5 | 38.2 | 23.2 | 518 |

# TIPS: A New Transition Planning System for Schools

*by David R. Johnson, Sandy Thompson, Sheryl Evelo, Kristin Stolte, and Jim Thompson*

Over the past decade, the transition of youth with disabilities from school to adult life has become a primary concern for parents and professionals. A multitude of local, state, and national follow-up studies have focused attention on the limited outcomes attained by these young adults after years of special education services. What we know today regarding the needs, status, and community adjustment of youth with disabilities has evolved from these follow-up studies. Also, since the 1984-85 school year, the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, has been collecting data on students with disabilities exiting the educational system through program completion or otherwise; data has been kept on disability category and age, and level of anticipated adult services. While this information has been available for some time, few states have attempted to use it for local, regional, or state planning.

## Need for Outcome Data

Efforts to improve state and local transition policies and practices must be based, in part, on information and data concerning the postschool outcomes and community adjustment of young adults with disabilities. This data is essential when evaluating the effectiveness and efficiency of public policies, administrative practices, funding strategies, interagency cooperation, and services. As discussed by Bruininks, Wolman, and Thurlow (1990):

> Assessing the post-school status of former students in special education has several important goals:
>
> 1. influencing and changing public policies about programs and their populations;
>
> 2. identifying needed post-school services and problems in coordinating assistance for former students and their families;
>
> 3. documenting continuing needs of former students for use in making decisions about reforms in school curricula and practices; and
>
> 4. evaluating the cost effectiveness of programs by conducting cost-benefit or cost-effectiveness analyses for the programs and society.

The primary utility of outcome data is to provide a general indication of program impact and effectiveness. However, general indicators are not sufficient to guide program improvement. The most informative portion of follow-up data is the "school experience" variable that can be manipulated by the school—for example, curriculum emphasis or family involvement in the IEP process. The key to making follow-up data more useful is to regularly document the school experiences and transition planning processes of students in relation to their post-school outcomes. This is referred to as a *follow-along system*, and is designed as an ongoing method to enhance transition services rather than a one-time follow-up evaluation.

Evaluation data on outcomes of schooling and community adjustment of youth with disabilities provides a firm foundation for improving secondary programs, transition planning strategies, service delivery evaluations, analyzing public policies, and structuring more effective school and community services. A system for gathering and utilizing data on post-school outcomes for students with disabilities has been developed in Minnesota and will soon be available across the country. It is called TIPS - the Transition Information and Planning System.

## Outcome Data Through TIPS

The primary purpose of TIPS is to produce information on student characteristics, program characteristics, and outcomes that can be used in student and program planning. The functions of the system include: (1) linkage of database information to program improvement in the areas of curricular practice, design of effective service interventions for individuals, and development of dropout prevention strategies; (2) utilization of database information in the development of IEPs and classroom level instructional objectives; (3) generation of information that can be used effectively in anticipating the postschool service needs of students with disabilities; (4) production of information that facilitates interagency planning for transition; and (5) provision of database support for local policy analysis and program development. Each of these functions revolves around improving transition services through systematic application of data-based information.

TIPS employs a microcomputer software program that permits easy access for standard analyses and the capability for integrating data for more sophisticated analyses via a large mainframe computer. The data management system is designed so that school personnel without extensive experience in the use of computers and statistics can use it effectively with minimal training. In addition to the general data files, the system is also designed to generate written reports for use in transition planning. For example, student data can be aggregated district wide or by school and/or program, and a series of generic reports that describe population characteristics, program characteristics, and outcomes can be generated. For large districts or multi-district special education programs, uniform descriptive information on students,

programs, and postschool outcomes provides program planners with an accurate and detailed profile that can be used in improving and planning transition programs. The development of special reports on specific topics such as "anticipated services" and "graduation/dropout status" is also possible using this system.

TIPS is currently nearing completion and will be piloted in selected school districts in the fall of 1992. It is anticipated that this system will be available for general use in 1993. Once in use, this system will enhance the ability of educators to conduct assessments, improve curriculum and program planning, report on the post-school outcomes of graduates and dropouts, anticipate and report on the future needs of students with disabilities, and initiate the development of systematic interagency strategies to improve services. Ultimately, the information available through the system can be used for shaping public policy, bringing about greater levels of collaboration among schools and community service agencies, and improving service delivery practices across the nation.

*TIPS was designed through a U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS), follow-up/follow-along project implemented by the Institute on Community Integration, University of Minnesota in cooperation with the Minneapolis Public Schools. For information on TIPS, call David Johnson at (612) 624-1062.*

*David R. Johnson is an Associate Director at the Institute on Community Integration, University of Minnesota. Sandy Thompson is Transition Specialist at the Minnesota Department of Education. Sheryl Evelo, Kristin Stolte, and Jim Thompson are project staff at the Institute on Community Integration.*

**Reference: Bruininks, R.H., Wolman, C., & Thurlow, M. (1990). Considerations in designing survey studies for follow-up systems for special education service programs. Remedial and Special Education, 11 (2), 7-17.**

## TIPS: A Teacher's View

*by Mary Ann Brenk*

When I first heard about TIPS (Transition Information and Planning System), I was excited. The program planning and tracking capabilities, potential to generate an IEP, and focus on transition seemed like an answer to a prayer. I could envision TIPS simplifying my job and, with the concrete data it provided, allowing our staff to design much improved programs both for individuals and for our school. So when the opportunity to test TIPS presented itself, I eagerly accepted.

As with anything new, TIPS initially felt awkward to use and was more time consuming than expected. However, as I became accustomed to the system, I found it to be a highly efficient planning tool. Most impressive was the ease with which I could retrieve needed information. Instead of sifting through years worth of papers in a file, I could call up a single screen and view what a student had planned and accomplished in a given goal area over a four year period. This feature was particularly helpful when sharing information with professionals from other agencies who were working with a student.

While I anticipated the additional time needed to learn a new system, I did not expect the difficulty I experienced in adjusting my thinking/planning processes to fit TIPS. Like most teachers, I had developed a series of pat phrases and formulas for moving through the IEP process efficiently. My approach was geared to our present forms and to how a high school is organized with its primary focus on the student fitting into an academic mold; transition was an "add-on." TIPS forced me to view a student's high school experience much more broadly, to focus on transition immediately, and to fit academic skills within transition goals rather than vice versa. It made me consider how a ninth grader's program would help him/her achieve a post high school goal as opposed to how the ninth grader's special education program could fit into the school's graduation requirements. The focus became how the school would fit the student's needs. For me this was a major shift in thinking that is not yet completely comfortable, but obviously makes more sense.

As I used TIPS with students, parents and other professionals, I became increasingly aware of the potential value of this system. One parent stated, "At first our focus was from crisis to crisis—just how to get our child through school. TIPS helps us all think about where he might be headed and how best to get him there." Our Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) counselor indicated that the information included in the program would help focus planning and would simplify transition to DRS. A student teacher commented, "Being very new at all this, it made me think about areas I probably wouldn't have considered." And students indicated that the process of focusing on transition helped them make a connection between what they were doing in school and their future plans.

In summary, I am excited about TIPS. I believe the system has tremendous potential for improving planning and programming for students with disabilities.

*Mary Ann Brenk is a Special Education Teacher at South High School, Minneapolis.*

# Waiting for Services

*by David R. Johnson and Teri Wallace*

The transition of youth with severe disabilities from school to work and community living continues to be a primary concern among parents, professionals, and policy-makers. Ongoing attention to the transition years has been maintained since the mid 1980s due to widespread reports of limited outcomes achieved by young adults as they leave school and attempt to access employment and needed adult services. Young adults with severe disabilities generally require multiple services from community agencies to enter and maintain adult roles, including employment, independent living, and postsecondary education. Inadequate preparation for this transition, increase in numbers exiting, and lack of availability of adult community services are often cite as problems associated with this transition.

## ■ Lack of Availability of Services

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act requires the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) to anticipate and to report data on the numbers and types of services youth with disabilities will likely require as they exit the educational system. Young adults with severe disabilities often require multiple services from several community service agencies following school. Further, many of these services must be made available and provided over extended periods of time, including, in many cases, the entire lifespan of the individual. When analyzing current and future service needs of young adults with severe disabilities, estimations can be made by comparing state school exit data, reports available on anticipated service needs of students exiting, and state reports on waiting lists.

## ■ Numbers Exiting School

Currently, large numbers of individuals receiving the benefits of Public Law 94-142 are exiting their special education programs across the United States. The U.S. Department of Education (1990) reports that during 1987-88 alone, 238,579 students with disabilities exited public school programs nationally. It is estimated that 11%, or 26,244 of these students have severe disabilities (severe and profound mental retardation, multi-handicapped, deaf-blind, others). This is a conservative estimate and does not include the relatively large numbers of students with serious emotional disturbances, substantial medical needs, and other physical and sensory disabilities.

One of the most dramatic influences of mandated public education for children and youth with disabilities has been the increase in the number of 18 to 21-year-olds served over the past few years. Young people served in public school programs between the ages of 18 and 21 are generally those with substantial levels of disability who require extended educational services. Based on a review of OSEP data, it is estimated that more than 60% of all special education students in the United States are between 15 and 22 years of age. With increases reported in certain categories of students, including students with moderate to severe disabilities, there will likely be increased competition for already scarce resources and services in communities as these young people exit their special education programs.

## ■ Anticipated Service Needs

As the number of students with severe disabilities exiting the educational system continues to rise, there will be an increased demand for adult services in communities. State personnel report that approximately one third of all anticipated services will be needed by students with mental retardation alone. The types of services most frequently needed by youth with disabilities leaving the special educational system include vocational training and placement, counseling and guidance, and evaluation services. Though problems are recognized in the capacity of states to report reliable information on anticipated services, current trends indicate substantial needs for postschool services among youth with severe disabilities.

Experience to date reveals that many individuals with severe disabilities applying for vocational and residential services may be placed on waiting lists for several years. Nationally, it is estimated that youth with severe disabilities who are now leaving or "aging out" of public schools will be joining the tens of thousands of persons now awaiting placement in community residential and day programs. Due to federal and state budget deficits over the past decade, the number and types of services individuals with severe disabilities will need upon exiting the public education system far exceeds the current and planned expansion of community services.

## ■ Information on Current Waiting Lists

A recent state-by-state study conducted by the Institute on Community Integration (Hayden, 1992) reported on the magnitude of the current waiting list problem now facing many young adults and families following the transition from school. The study found, for example, that over 60,000 adults with disabilities across the nation are waiting for community-based residential services, and over 35,000 persons are waiting for day program/vocational services. Adding all categories of services to these already large

numbers brings the total to 186,272 persons reported (225,752 when adjusted for missing data) in the nation currently waiting for residential, rehabilitation/vocational, support, and other services.

This dilemma is due, in part, to the belief that adult services are neither assumed nor perceived to be entitlement programs. Individuals with disabilities must qualify for services based on differential criteria imposed by individual agencies. This situation is unlike special education where qualification on the grounds of need guarantees services.

While addressing the requirements of adult service programs from an entitlement perspective is difficult and complex, the competing and overlapping nature of public policies and legislation necessitate that it be done. Providing additional information on service gaps and needs of persons with severe disabilities is an important step in weighing this issue as a future policy question in the United States.

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**Hayden, M. F. (1992, August). Adults with Mental Retardation and Other Developmental Disabilities Waiting for Community-Based Services in the U.S. Policy Research Brief, 4 (3). Minneapolis MN: University of Minnesota, Center for Residential Services and Community Living.**

*David R. Johnson is an Associate Director, and Teri Wallace is a Project Coordinator, at the Institute on Community Integration, University of Minnesota.*

## Business Helps Dream Come True

*by Kathy Raymor*

Fred Larson is a 1991 graduate of Burnsville (Minnesota) High School who has moved on to bigger and better things. He was born with developmental disabilities, and was in special education classes during his school years as well as some mainstream and vocational classes. His transition planning began in earnest about two years before he was to leave high school. By that time Fred had a county Developmental Disability Social Worker and Counselor from the Minnesota Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS). He spent part of each school day at Dakota County Technical College, Secondary Technical Center, working on vocational skills. The local high schools bus students to the technical college for "shifts" of vocational programs. Fred received training in the Food Industry Careers program where students learn food preparation, busing, dishwashing, and cleaning skills. This program was to provide the background for Fred's next vocational step—the McJobs Training Program.

Fred had long envied people who worked at McDonald's, his favorite eating establishment. When he was given the opportunity to go through the McJobs Training Program (a structured eight-week program for persons with special needs), he jumped at the chance. He couldn't have been prouder when he got his uniform, especially the baseball-type cap. Since he was still in school, this training was jointly funded by DRS and Vocational Education-Special Needs at the Department of Education. Burnsville High School provided transportation because this program was on Fred's IEP.

During the training Fred learned to clean and maintain the lobby, and work behind the grill on such things as putting together quarter pounders, frying burgers, and frying chicken nuggets. There were ups and downs to be sure, but Fred made steady progress and completed his training goals. He participated in the formal McJobs graduation ceremony in June, 1991, with cap and gown and diploma, and he gave a speech that he wrote himself. A highlight of the graduation was special guest speaker Chris Burke who plays Corky on the TV series, *Life Goes On*. Fred got to meet and shake hands with a real TV star.

Fred was hired as a regular employee at McDonald's. After a few months, the manager suggested that with training on more job stations, Fred could work more hours. The McJobs job coach spent an additional two weeks at the store to train Fred on more job stations. He successfully completed this, increased his hours, and is now working 32 hours a week at his "dream" job.

Mary Connelly, Fred's foster mother, stated that, "I never thought McDonald's would let Fred do as much as they have. When they've called and talked about all the things he could do and how hard he works, I've been really proud. He's a regular jack-of-all-trades—he makes burgers, fries, nuggets, pies, everything in the grill area. He is now working breakfast as well as lunch, so he had to learn all those jobs too. When we got Fred, we were told that he was severely and profoundly retarded and would never walk, talk, or do anything. And now here he is supporting himself, and he loves his job. He's a real success story!"

Fred just returned from a one-week vacation to Nashville. He saved his money, paid his own way and was excited to visit such attractions as Graceland and the Grand Ol' Opry. Yes, Fred is a real success!

*Kathy Raymor is a Career Rehabilitation Counselor at the Minnesota Division of Rehabilitation Services.*



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# National Center Addresses Educational Outcomes

*by Martha L. Thurlow*

Transition can no longer refer just to the process of providing services and invoking interagency collaborative efforts to ensure that students with disabilities proceed successfully from educational settings to community and work settings. In a national atmosphere where the focus has shifted from the *process* of education to the *results* of education, those of us concerned with transition must clearly define the results of the transition process, the outcomes that we expect for our students.

This redefinition is occurring nationally. In late 1989, President Bush and the governors of the 50 states identified six national education goals for *all* of America's students. Goals 3 and 5 specifically suggest that schools are responsible for more than in-school learning. The goals talk about students being prepared for responsible citizenship, further learning, and productive employment in our modern economy (Goal 3); they also talk about adults who are literate, who possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy, and who exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship (Goal 5). It is important to ask at this time whether these are the goals that we expect for the education of students with disabilities.

**Students leaving school are easily forgotten, even though they provide perhaps the most valuable index of the success of our transition programs.**

The idea of looking at educational outcomes for students with disabilities led to the establishment in 1990 of the National Center on Educational Outcomes for Students with Disabilities. Located at the University of Minnesota, the center's mission is to facilitate the development and use of indicators of educational outcomes for students with disabilities. Its work is grounded in the belief that responsible use of such indicators will enable students with disabilities to achieve better results from their educational experiences.

Two major activities of the center are helping address the outcomes of transition. First, the center annually conducts a survey of State Directors of Special Education to document the nature of activities designed to specify and measure the outcomes of education for students with disabilities in their states. Second, the center is working with State Directors and other key groups to define the types of outcomes that are important for students to attain from their educational experiences.

The results of the center's first annual state survey in 1991 revealed that post-school status studies have been conducted in 23 states and 4 other educational entities (e.g., District of Columbia, Guam). Many of the efforts started with federal funding support, and most are no longer in operation. Most of the follow-up study efforts that are ongoing are sponsored by general education in concert with vocational education. The difficulty with this arrangement is that only those students with disabilities who participated in vocational education are included in outcome data collection efforts, so we do not have a comprehensive picture of the outcomes of schooling for students with disabilities.

In defining the important outcomes of education for students with disabilities, the center is working with numerous groups to develop a model of the outcome domains, and then a list of indicators of those domains. In its fourth version the model identifies six outcome domains: literacy, independence/responsibility, social/behavioral skills, contribution/citizenship, satisfaction, and physical and mental health. In addition, two enabling outcomes are defined: presence/participation and accommodation/adaptation/compensation. Clearly, these outcome domains are broader in focus than those included in the six national goals. The center is now working on identifying the specific indicators of each domain area that states might want to use to present a state-level picture of the outcomes of education for students with disabilities. Examples of indicators might be the proportion of former students who are successful employees, the number of former students who vote in national elections, and the proportion of former students who volunteer time to community or non-profit activities.

How we picture the transition outcomes of students overall must relate back to what we believe are the important outcomes of education for each of our students. National debate currently is not inclusive of all students, particularly students with disabilities. Our center's investigation of the related issue of how much information our national data collection programs can provide about students with disabilities has revealed extensive exclusion of students with disabilities. Approximately 40-50% of school-age students with disabilities are excluded from prominent national data collection programs. This exclusion is being repeated in national surveys of adult literacy.

As work progresses in the area of transition for students with disabilities, the issue of inclusion must remain a central concern. Students leaving school are easily forgotten, even though they provide perhaps the most valuable index of the success of our transition programs.

*Martha Thurlow is Assistant Director of the National Center on Educational Outcomes at the University of Minnesota. For center reports and other information contact the center at (612) 626-1530.*

# Inclusive Education and Transition

*by Sandy Thompson*

*"We can't do transition because our students are in regular education classes all day."* If I had a nickel for every time I've heard this line, I would be rich! I have to admit that, as a high school special education teacher, having my own class of special education students made it easy to teach functional skills and easy to be flexible in planning the school day. But, after finishing a school career in a segregated setting, could my students interact with others in the community? Were they accepted by community members who may never have met a person with a disability? How many chances did they have for jobs, places to live, and recreation within their communities?

I have concluded over the years that a schedule that was easy for me to maintain may have resulted in community isolation rather than inclusion for some of my students. So, is the opposite trend toward total inclusion in regular education the best solution? I think the answer to that question lies in recent research revealing that many students with disabilities are experiencing major difficulties in the mainstream of secondary education. This can primarily be seen by the high dropout rate, especially among students with learning disabilities and emotional and behavioral disorders. The majority of students who do not accumulate enough credits to pass ninth grade eventually leave high school before graduation; the dropout rate among students with disabilities is about double that of their nondisabled cohorts. These facts confirm that simply including students with disabilities in regular education as it currently exists is not the best solution.

So, what is the solution? Researchers and practitioners throughout the nation have suggested several strategies for improving the preparation of students with disabilities for life after school. These include:

- Offering a combination of regular and special education courses for students with disabilities, with the primary emphasis of special education classes on functional skills and transition planning, not just extra help on regular education coursework. These special education courses are offered for credit as substitutes for similar regular education courses.
- Including students with disabilities in regular academic courses until graduation requirements are met and then adding school years (through age 21) to learn functional skills and make a smooth, focused transition to adult life.
- Merging special and regular education into a single system designed to meet the unique needs and desired outcomes of all students. The system would include regular interaction with a professional (i.e., guidance counselor, teacher, support service facilitator) who provides individualized ongoing transition assistance for all students.

Regardless of which of the above strategies are used, in designing a workable secondary education system for students with disabilities, we need to focus on the following:

- Keeping students in some type of educational setting.
- Improving competence in basic skills.
- Improving competence in the vocational and community living skills needed for success in adult life.
- Developing a transition plan with long term goals.
- Building self awareness, self determination, and self-advocacy skills.
- Building post-school support needed to meet goals.

In an "ideal system" that encompasses the results of recent research, best practice, and the above goals, all high school students could share culturally and ability diverse homerooms where they learn about cooperation, communication, citizenship, and community support. In these homerooms all staff would get to know and work with diverse students in nonacademic settings. Paraprofessionals could support students in this type of setting. An array of courses would be offered that provide credit for graduation while teaching skills that help each individual meet personal goals. For example, math courses could range from advanced calculus to a community course in using banks and stores. English could range from college prep courses to reading for enjoyment at any literacy level. Science could include physics, biology, and chemistry, along with caring for the environment. Vocational education could be an option for any student with community experiences and support offered as needed. Vocational seminars could focus on maintaining employment; building self advocacy, support, and accommodations; and connecting with adult services.

When dreaming about an inclusive educational system that encompasses the interests and needs of all students, of course we have to face reality. We face such challenges as how to include students with emotional and behavioral disorders, where to begin making school-wide changes, how to convince all faculty that inclusive education and preparation for transition is the best route for all students, and how to build the positive momentum that can make the system work for each student. It is a long, slow process. But, the result will be one that can benefit our entire society.

*Sandy Thompson is Transition Specialist at the Minnesota Department of Education.*

# A Postsecondary Student Retention System with Related Accommodation Teams

*by Lynda Price*

A Postsecondary Student Retention System has been developed and is currently in the third year of field-testing at Northeast Metro Technical College (NMTC) in White Bear Lake, Minnesota. This comprehensive system was originally created to coordinate the services of counselors, evaluators, student accommodation specialists, and community agency personnel. Between 150 to 200 postsecondary students with mild disabilities who are considered to be "at risk" (i.e., who may not successfully reach their vocational training and/or employment goals) are currently being identified and accommodated by this extensive system.

An innovative feature of the student retention system model, which takes advantage of staff and resources already in place at Northeast Metro Technical College, is the use of accommodation teams to provide services to students with disabilities. Each accommodation team (AT) consists of a vocational counselor, a vocational program instructor, and a special needs support services specialist. These ATs focus their efforts jointly to consider all possible solutions for individual student problems that were identified during a student interview at the time of admission to the school. During that comprehensive, systematic interview each student's individual strengths and weaknesses were highlighted, referrals were provided for further assessment or specialized services, creation of a personalized Individualized Transition Educational Plan (ITEP) was initiated, and a referral was made to an in-house accommodation team. Each student with a disability is assigned to an AT after the interview takes place and the ITEP is written. The AT then tackles the challenges inherent in actually implementing the ITEP to maximize student success and increase student retention in the student's chosen vocational program.

The ATs use a team approach to bring together specialists with differing points of view, insights, and expertise to focus on the individual needs of each student. The goal of all AT members is discovering and implementing viable, effective strategies that enhance the potential and the learning outcomes of each student with disabilities.

When the AT model was initially conceptualized, the NMTC administration discovered that the staff who make up the ATs often first required additional training and in-house support. As a result, the administration provided information through inservices, in-house planning sessions, and formal on-site college coursework. Other types of groundwork also had to take place. For instance, important philosophical changes had to be addressed by NMTC administration, staff, and instructors and explored again and again. Innovative and even controversial ideas were examined and emphasized.

Actual implementation of the AT concept also assumed that all NMTC staff, administration, and faculty, regardless of their previous background or current program assignment, should be capable of functioning as active members of a cooperative team for service delivery to all at-risk students. Therefore, extensive on-site training in the form of college courses was offered to 55 instructors, support service staff, and administrators. The intent of the courses was to make personnel aware of issues, methods, materials, and curriculum development applicable to learners with special needs. Specific topics included instructors' abilities to teach vocational skills related to academic concepts; knowledge of and sensitivity to cultural, social, and academic characteristics of various groups with specific disabilities and special needs; and specific teaching strategies to enhance instructional accommodations for students with special needs.

The ATs have benefitted Northeast Metro Technical College since their inception. In fact, the results of this type of decentralized assistance have actually exceeded expectations. For example, the amount of support services requested by NMTC instructors and staff has been lower than expected since the college staff started using ATs. This may be because the cooperative approaches fostered by AT members have absorbed most of the work previously shouldered by support services personnel. Another benefit is the increasingly effective program instruction for all postsecondary students, both with and without special needs. For instance, all students seem to do better in their programs when vocational coursework is structured to meet the wide variety of learning styles and when it integrates related academic skills (i.e., reading, math, writing). Consequently, although academic skills can still be taught in isolation, the program instructors feel that they are more effective teachers when instructional activities are directly related to training program concepts within the context of job-related training settings.

In summary, many professionals at NMTC attest that accommodation teams can facilitate learning by incorporating each team member's specific talents, perspectives, and insights into effective ways to teach academic skills within postsecondary vocational training programs. They believe that all of their postsecondary students are now learning what is necessary to be competitive, successful employees in the challenging work world of the 1990s and beyond.

*Lynda Price is Project Assistant at the Institute on Community Integration, University of Minnesota.*

# Transition to Postsecondary Education: Lynn's Story

*by Sheryl Evelo and Denise Simonett*

An increasing number of students who have learning disabilities are graduating from high school and entering postsecondary education. Transition efforts that begin early (age 14 or 9th grade) can be critical in assisting the student and family in developing appropriate plans to insure future success in college.

Such is the story of Lynn Heider. Lynn received special education resource services beginning in elementary school for her learning disabilities. In high school, she continued to receive special education support for English, spelling, and study skills. During her junior year, she became involved in a research/demonstration transition project called Project EXTRA. Through the project she met on a bi-weekly basis with a transition counselor to discuss, develop, and coordinate activities that would lead to postsecondary education.

As a high school junior, Lynn did not have a clear goal or focus for her life after high school, although she had a wide range of interests and ideas including child care, teaching, design, and sports. Her work experiences included babysitting and life guarding. Lynn was hoping to attend college, but she was extremely concerned about the difficulty she might have with classes. She was also considering the idea of taking a year off to work, make money, travel, or be a nanny.

During her junior and senior years Lynn, with assistance from her transition counselor and team, engaged in a number of transition planning activities that helped to bring her adult goals into focus. The transition team consisted of Lynn, her mother, the IEP case manager, the Project EXTRA transition counselor, the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) counselor, and the high school guidance counselor. Lynn worked with transition team members on tasks that included completing a learning styles inventory and Career Assessment Inventory, visiting colleges, inviting a DRS counselor to meet with her and her family to discuss services and eligibility requirements, identifying academic accommodations appropriate for her needs, attending transition team meetings, taking the college entrance exam, practicing using accommodations, and applying to several colleges.

Lynn was very motivated and able to follow through on all of the activities that were suggested or started while she was in high school. An example of teamwork, coordination, and follow-through can be seen by examining the link that was established between Lynn and DRS.

Lynn was referred to DRS in her junior year. The counselor met with her individually to discuss goals and plans for postsecondary education. The counselor also attended the IEP/transition meetings with Lynn and her mother. Initial DRS services included counseling, guidance, and psychological testing to substantiate her learning disability and to obtain a clearer picture of her academic strengths and weaknesses. Lynn applied to and was accepted at a community college in her senior year. She was asked to contact her DRS counselor as soon as she had received her Student Aid Report (SAR). All students are told that it is their responsibility to keep in contact with their DRS counselor, and that no financial assistance for training can be authorized until the counselor has received a copy of the student's SAR.

Lynn called her DRS counselor promptly after receiving her SAR and set up an appointment to meet to discuss her school plans and class schedule. Lynn openly expressed her excitement at the prospect of starting college, as well as her fears that perhaps the workload would be too difficult and prove to be overwhelming to her. The counselor assured her that she had the capabilities to succeed in a college program with support from the school's Learning Assistance Center. Lynn already possessed the other necessary attributes for success: motivation, perseverance, and a strong work ethic.

Lynn is having a very successful first year at college, and appears to be enjoying college life immensely. She is maintaining a B average and is utilizing the supports offered from the Learning Assistance Center. Some of the accommodations she uses are the testing room for extended time on tests, a notetaker, a spell checker, word processor, and a proof reader for final papers. She is also able to comfortably advocate for herself, asking her instructors for outlines, clarification on assignments, and extra time if needed.

Upon completion of her program at the community college, DRS will assist Lynn if she decides to transfer to a four-year college program. At the end of her training, DRS can provide help with finding a job, and once placed, will provide follow-along services for 60 days to ensure that both she and her employer are satisfied.

Transition can and does work, as long as all team members work cooperatively. As always, the most important member of the team is the student. If the student has a strong commitment to succeed with her/his transition plan, usually the rest of the pieces fall into place.

*Sheryl Evelo is Transition Counselor at Project EXTRA, Minneapolis. Denise Simonett is a Counselor at the Minnesota Division of Rehabilitation Services. For information on Project EXTRA call Terry Collins at (612) 625-5366.*



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# Resources for Transition Information

## ■ Programs and Resource Centers

- **ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education**, The Ohio State University, 1960 Kenny Road, Columbus, OH 43210, (614) 486-3655, (800) 848-4815
- **North Central Regional Information Exchange**, Institute on Community Integration, University of Minnesota, 6 Pattee Hall, 150 Pillsbury Drive SE, Minneapolis, MN 55455 • (612) 626-7220
- **PACER Center**, 4826 Chicago Avenue South, Minneapolis, MN 55417-1055 (612) 827-2966
- **Minnesota Curriculum Services Center Library**, 70 West County Road B-2, Little Canada, MN 55117-1402 • (612) 483-4442, (800) 652-9024
- **Secondary Transition Intervention Effectiveness Institute**, College of Education, University of Illinois, 110 Education Building, 1310 S. Sixth Street, Champaign, IL 61820 • (217) 333-2325
- **The Vocational Studies Center**, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 964 Educational Sciences Building, 1025 W. Johnson Street, Madison, WI 53706 (608) 263-2929
- **National Transition Implementation Institute**, Institute on Community Integration, University of Minnesota, 12 Pattee Hall, 150 Pillsbury Drive SE, Minneapolis, MN 55455 • (612) 624-1062

## ■ Publications

- **Rural Transition Strategies That Work.** (1988). By the American Council on Rural Special Education. Order from National Rural Account, National Rural Development Institute, Western Washington University, Bellingham, WA 98225.
- **Teaching the Possibilities: Home Living Resource Guide for Transition Planning** (1990) and **Teaching the Possibilities: Jobs and Job Training Resource Guide for Transition Planning** (1991). Order from Minnesota Curriculum Services Center, 70 West County Road B-2, Little Canada, MN 55117-1402 • (612) 483-4442, (800) 652-9024.
- **Transition from School to Adult Life: Models, Linkages, and Policy** (1992). By F.R. Rusch, L., DeStefano, J. Chadsey-Rusch, A.L. Phelps, & E. Szymanski. Sycamore Publishing Company, Sycamore, IL.

*The following are available from the Institute on Community Integration, University of Minnesota, 109 Pattee Hall, 150 Pillsbury Drive SE, Minneapolis, MN 55455 • (612) 624-4512. Call or write for ordering information.*

- **Transition Strategies That Work: Profiles of Successful High School Transition Programs** (1991).
- **Interagency Planning for Transition: Quality Standards for Improvement** (1990).
- **Policy Research Brief: Adults with Mental Retardation and Other Developmental Disabilities Waiting for Community Services in the U.S.** (1992).

## State Transition Systems Change Grantees

- **Arkansas**: Sidney Padgett, Transition Project, PO Box 3811, Little Rock, AR 72203
- **California:** Pat Dougan, California Department of Education, P.O. Box 944272, Sacramento, CA 94244-2720
- **Colorado:** Donald St. Louis, Rocky Mountain Resource and Training Institute, 6355 Ward Rd., Arvada, CO 80004
- **Iowa:** Victor W. Neilsen, Iowa Department of Education, Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation, Jessie Parker Bldg., Des Moines, IA 50319
- **Maine:** David Noble Stockford, Maine Department of Education, State House Station #23, Augusta, ME 04333-0023
- **Minnesota:** Stephanie Corbey and Sandy Thompson, Minnesota Department of Education, 828 Capitol Square Building, St. Paul, MN 55101

  Doug Johnson, Division of Rehabilitation Services, 390 N Robert St., 5th Floor, St. Paul, MN 55101
- **Nebraska:** Barbara Schliesser, Nebraska Department of Education, PO Box 94987, Lincoln, NE 68509
- **New Hampshire:** Robert T. Kennedy, New Hampshire Department of Education, 101 S. Pleasant St., Concord, NH 03301
- **New York:** Deborah Colley and Doris Jamieson, New York State Education Department, One Commerce Plaza, #1613, Albany, NY 12234
- **Utah:** Donna Suter, STUDY Grant, 350 E. 500 S. St. #202, Salt Lake City, UT 84111
- **Vermont:** Richard Schattman, Vermont Department of Education, Div. of Special and Comp. Education, 120 State St., Montpellier VT 05620

*IDEA, continued from page 1*
fields of secondary special education, vocational rehabilitation, vocational education, and others have been actively developing alternative approaches to the delivery of transition services. Advances and innovations in interagency cooperation, community-based training, functional curricula, supported employment, transition planning, student and parental involvement in school and post-school decision making, self determination, and the like are all signs of progress. The federal government has participated in this developing area through a variety of policy, interagency, and funding mechanisms, culminating in the passage of IDEA (P.L. 101-476). The evolution of transition services in the next few years will be shaped by IDEA, which contains provisions giving added impetus to current efforts.

## ■ The Impact of IDEA

IDEA mandates specific transition services for youth and young adults with disabilities who are 16 years of age or older. The legislation promotes effective transition programming by (a) providing a definition of "transition services;" (b) listing the set of "coordinated activities" that comprise transition services, and detailing the basis for determining which activities are appropriate for an individual student; (c) specifying the process by which a statement of needed transition services is to be included in the student's IEP; and (d) describing the responsibilities of the educational agency to monitor the provision of services.

Prior to the enactment of IDEA, only Sections 626 and 618 of the Education of the Handicapped Act set a course or direction for states to take when formulating transition policies and services. The language contained in these sections was not prescriptive and left states with broad discretionary powers over the nature of activities to pursue. To date, some of the most promising developments occurring with individual states have included: (a) the development of linkages between schools and other community service agencies and employers, (b) broadening of the scope of secondary curricula and programs, (c) development of interagency agreements, and (d) changes in the roles and skill requirements of selected transition personnel. Many of these developments have occurred through OSERS-sponsored demonstration and research projects. Nationally, however, we recognize that transition reform has been slow and has occurred inconsistently across states and locales.

This emphasis on state discretion in shaping transition policies and programs for youth with disabilities and families reflects an understanding of the extremely varied nature of state and local contexts into which this new federal policy - IDEA - intervenes. For example, a recent state-by-state analysis on the status of transition policies and programs (Stowitschek, 1992) revealed that while 77% of the states have written cooperative interagency agreements addressing transition services, only 10 states (19%) have documentation of a formal transition planning process. Further, the evaluation of outcomes of transition was mentioned in the documents of 30 states (58%). However, few of the states identified the use of employment data, numbers of students entering/exiting postsecondary education programs, or other transition outcome information as data sources to evaluate service programs. Some states reported that active efforts were being made to coordinate transition services for youth with disabilities; others were marked by deeply entrenched separations of responsibility with little cooperation across agency boundaries.

Given these varying "starting places" among the states, state-level response to the new requirements of IDEA will likewise be highly variable. The new federal legislation takes the approach of defining transition services and specifying its broad goals, suggesting key ingredients of the process for reaching those goals, but leaves further details of implementation to the states. This raises the question of whether widely varied processes for developing and implementing transition policies and practices in special education can uniformly meet the goals of the new federal legislation. For example, are states that differ in key operational definitions, organizational arrangements for service delivery, and/or histories of interagency coordination able to plan and implement programs that enhance postschool experiences and adjustment? Are states able to meet those goals with similar effectiveness, costs, and for similar groups of youth and families? Or, do state variations translate into diverse arrangements that reach different kinds of young people with different kinds of experiences?

## ■ Conclusion

Current variations in the development of transition policies and programs within states, mounting interest to secure successful transitions for youth with disabilities, increased pressures emphasizing across-the-board program accountability and cost effectiveness, changes in the nature of service delivery patterns, and other influences point to the extremely dynamic policy context of transition. The outcomes of the next five years will enable us to better understand this dynamic quality of transition policy and program development, and ultimately its impact on individuals with disabilities and families.

**Reference: Stowitschek, J. J. (1992). Policy and planning in transition programs at the state agency level. In F. R. Rusch, L. DeStefano, J. Chadsey-Rusch, L. A. Phelps, & E. Szymanski (Eds.), Transition from school to adult life. Sycamore IL: Sycamore Publishing Company.**

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**IMPACT: Feature Issue on Transition**
**September 1992**

**Managing Editor:** Vicki Gaylord
**Issue Editors:** Teri Wallace
Sandy Thompson
David R. Johnson

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The mission of the Institute is to apply its resources to improve the quality and community orientation of professional services and social supports available to individuals with disabilities and their families. Efforts are directed at facilitating the independence of citizens with disabilities and their social integration into the mainstream of community life.

Inquiries about the Institute or IMPACT can be directed to: Institute on Community Integration, 6 Pattee Hall, University of Minnesota, 150 Pillsbury Drive SE, Minneapolis, MN 55455 • (612) 624-4848

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